

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEGUCI 00552 031935Z
ACTION OES-06

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UNCLAS TEGUCIGALPA 0552

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EFIS, UK, HO
SUBJ: COMMERCIAL FISHING IN HONDURAS WATERS

REF: STATE 022378

1. AS REQUESTED REFTTEL, EMBASSY INQUIRED AT HONDURAS GOVERNMENT FISHERIES OFFICE WHETHER FOREIGN FISHING VESSELS COULD FISH IN HONDURAN WATERS. FOLLOWING BASED ON CONVERSATION WITH MR. CUERTO OF THAT OFFICE. PRESENT FISHERIES LAW PERMITS LICENSING ONLY HONDURAN FLAG VESSELS FOR PURPOSES OF COMMERCIAL FISHING IN ITS TERRITORIAL WATERS. ONLY HONDURANS AND LEGALLY RESIDENT ALIENS MAY BE ISSUED FISHING LICENSES AND CONCESSIONS. HONDURAN TERRITORIAL WATERS PRESENTLY EXTEND ONLY 12 MILES, BUT JURISDICTION FOR FISHERIES IS EXPECTED TO BE EXTENDED TO 200 MILES IN NEK LAW UNDER PREPARATION. ITS ADOPTION NOT EXPECTED FOR THREE TO SIX MONTHS. SOME RICH FISHING GROUNDS OFF HONDURAS' CARIBBEAN COAST ARE OUTSIDE 12-MILE LIMIT.

2. MR. CUERTO POINTED OUT THAT HONDURAN OWNERSHIP AND REGISTRY REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCESS TO FISHING GROUNDS WITHIN 12-MILE MIGHT BE MET BY AFFILIATION WITH ONE OF PLANTS
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PAGE 02 TEGUCI 00552 031935Z

ON HONDURAS BAY ISLANDS, OR FORMING A NEW COMPANY WITH LOCAL PARTNERS. HE ALSO INDICATED THAT HONDURAS MIGHT CONSIDER A BILATERAL AGREEMENT UNDER WHICH SIGNATORY COUNTRIES WOULD GRANT RECIPROCAL FISHING RIGHTS.

3. HONDURAS FISHERIES LAW (DECREE NO. 154 OF 1959)
RESERVES COMMERCIAL FISHING TO HONDURAN RESIDENTS AND TO

COMPANIES AT LEAST 51 PERCENT LOCALLY OWNED. ONLY NATIVE BORN HONDURANS MAY OWN FISHING BOATS OR BE BOAT CAPTAINS. CATCH MUST BE UNLOADED AND IF FOR EXPORT, THEN ALSO PROCESSED AND PACKED, IN HONDURAN PORTS. NOT ALL PROVISIONS OF THIS 14-PAGE LAW ARE BEING IMPLEMENTED.

4. RAPID GROWTH OF LOBSTER CATCH OFF CARIBBEAN COAST TO 2,000 TONS IN PAST TWO YEARS INDICATES PRESENCE OF RICH FISHING GROUNDS. SEE TEGUCIGALPA A-49 OF JULY 11, 1976. OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL FISHERIES, USDOC CAN PROVIDE FURTHER INFORMATION, INCLUDING NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF ABOUT TEN SEAFOOD PACKERS OPERATING HERE.
BECKER

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